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**VALLEY MARKS SIXTH WINTER POLLUTION SEASON WITHOUT CO VIOLATION**  
***EPA-Approved Plan to Reduce Particulate Pollution and Air Quality-Related Health Problems***

(Phoenix)— The Maricopa County Environmental Services Department (MCESD) announced today that the Valley has ended the sixth straight winter pollution season without violating the federal standard for carbon monoxide (CO). Particulate matter (PM-10) pollution continues to be a challenge.

“We’ve proven we can make a difference in reducing carbon monoxide, and we have to keep working together as a community to reduce the particulate pollution,” said Maricopa County Chairman Don Stapley. “Citizens can help by reporting dusty construction sites and unpaved parking lots to the environmental complaint line.”

MCESD issued a high pollution advisory (HPA) in January for CO as a precautionary measure to help keep pollution from exceeding the federal standard. MCESD issued an HPA for PM-10 in October. Particulate pollution levels exceeded the federal standard four days during the season that ran from October 1, 2001 through February 28, 2002.

The Phoenix metropolitan area is currently in non-attainment of the 24-hour and annual health-based standard for particulate matter. In January the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the region’s PM-10 plan designed to bring Phoenix air quality into attainment with federal standards and reduce air quality related health problems.

“The plan that EPA approved is expected to substantially reduce particulate emissions by 2006,” said Al Brown, Director of the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. “We added air quality inspectors and enforcement staff to monitor significant sources of airborne particulates. The positive impact on the public’s health from the pollution reduction will be substantial,” Brown said.

The PM-10 plan contains the following pollution control measures:

- Paving 60 miles of unpaved roads,
- Increased inspection rates,
- Enhanced dust control enforcement,
- Use of additional PM-10 efficient street sweepers,
- Expanded public education and outreach,
- Reduced emissions from alleys and unpaved roads and parking lots, and
- Reduced fugitive dust from agricultural sources.

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The primary source of the Valley's winter pollution is motor vehicles. To reduce particulate pollution and carbon monoxide, Valley drivers were asked to reduce their driving, avoid unpaved roads and keep their cars in good running condition. Commuters were also asked to carpool/vanpool, bus, bike, walk or telecommute. The County asked residents to refrain from using wood burning fireplaces on days when they issued high pollution advisories.

In conjunction with the control measure in the PM-10 plan, the Phoenix area has been aggressive in implementing a number of air quality strategies in order to stay in compliance with federal standards for CO and reach attainment for particulates. Such measures include:

- the high air pollution advisory program;
- Maricopa County's Vehicle Repair and Retrofit Program;
- clean burning fireplace ordinances;
- the Trip Reduction Program,
- the citizen's environmental complaint line;
- cleaner burning gasoline;
- enhanced vehicle emissions testing programs; and
- the Clean Air Campaign.

The primary sources of particulate pollution in the Valley are windblown dust from construction sites, agricultural fields, unpaved parking lots and roads, disturbed vacant lots, and paved road dust. When dust is in the air, we breathe it into our lungs. These particles can become trapped in the lungs where they can damage tissue and impair the lungs' ability to function. The elderly, children, and people with chronic lung disease, influenza, and asthma are especially sensitive to high levels of particulate matter.

CO comes primarily from vehicles, but also from lawn and construction equipment, fireplaces and woodstoves. CO is a tasteless, odorless, colorless gas that interferes with the body's ability to use oxygen, even when there are no physical symptoms.

#### **Air Quality Information**

In May, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) will begin issuing high air pollution advisories for ozone, which is the summertime pollutant. For more information regarding the ozone advisory program contact Valley Metro at (602) 262-RIDE.

For an up to date local air quality report call (602) 420-9458 or visit the Environmental Services Web site at: [www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/airday.asp](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/airday.asp). Contact "Earth 911," an environmental hotline, at 1-800-CLEAN-UP. To file a complaint about possible air quality rule violations call the Environmental Complaint Line at (602) 506-6616.